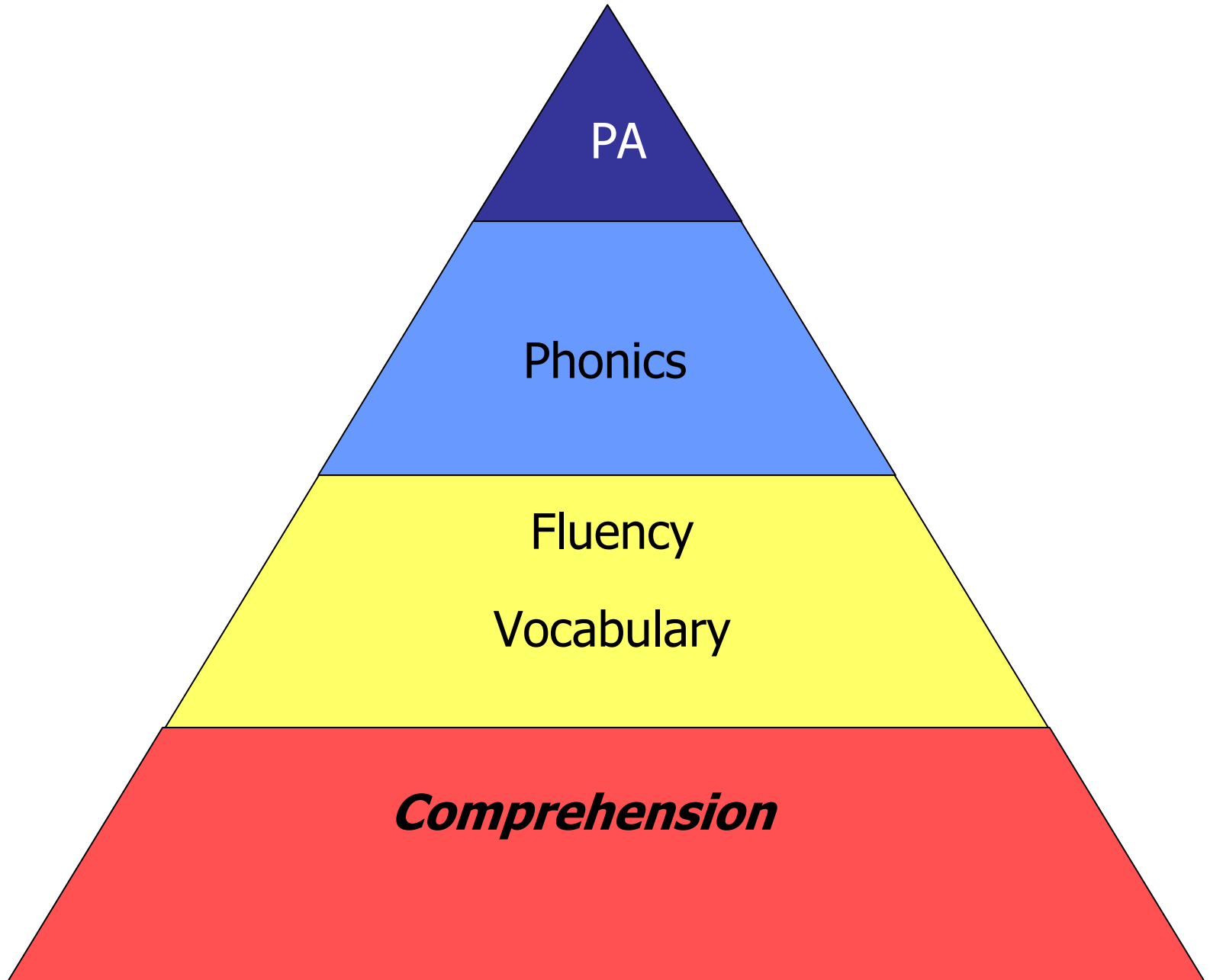


# Words Can Be Fun: Developing Vocabulary

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# Why do we need to be intentional about vocabulary instruction?

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- ❑ First graders from higher SES groups knew about twice as many words as lower SES children
- ❑ High school seniors near the top of the class knew about 4 times as many words as lower performing students
- ❑ High knowledge 3<sup>rd</sup> graders had vocabularies almost equal to the lowest performing 12<sup>th</sup> graders

As cited in Beck, McKeown, & Kucan. (2002). *Bringing words to life*.

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- ❑ Children who read a lot learn about 8 words per day—more than 3000 words per year.
  - ❑ Those who don't read a lot learn about 2 words per day—about 700 words per year.

(Ohanian, 2002)

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# What does research say about vocabulary development?

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Children acquire vocabulary by reading and being read to.

(Ohanian, 2002)

Anderson, Heibert et al., 1985  
Krashen, 1993; 1996  
McQuillan, 1998  
Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998  
Nagy, 1988  
and others

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# What does research say about teaching vocabulary?

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- Give children time to read
  - Develop unfamiliar words for concepts they are familiar with
  - Be contextual more than definitional
    - Use the words in speech
    - Look at the words in print
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- Be more intentional about focusing on words children encounter through reading.
  - Make word learning fun and interesting. Help children become fascinated with words.
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# Choosing words to teach

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- Tier 1
  - Words already in children's vocabulary-no instruction needed (clock, baby, walk)
- Tier 2
  - Used frequently by mature language users. More precise way to refer to ideas already known (drowsy, amusing, industrious)
- Tier 3
  - Low frequency and limited to specific content areas (isotope, lathe, peninsula)

# When choosing words

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Think about:

- Can I explain the meaning of the word in known terms to the learner?
  - Is the word useful and interesting to the students?
  - Will there be opportunities for seeing and using the word?
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# Selecting words for vocabulary development

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## □ PRIMARY

- Tradebooks read aloud by teachers
- Engage in vocabulary activities after the story

## □ INTEMEDIATE

- Books students read independently
- Introduce vocabulary prior to the story

Beck, McKeown, & Kucan,  
2002

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# Activity

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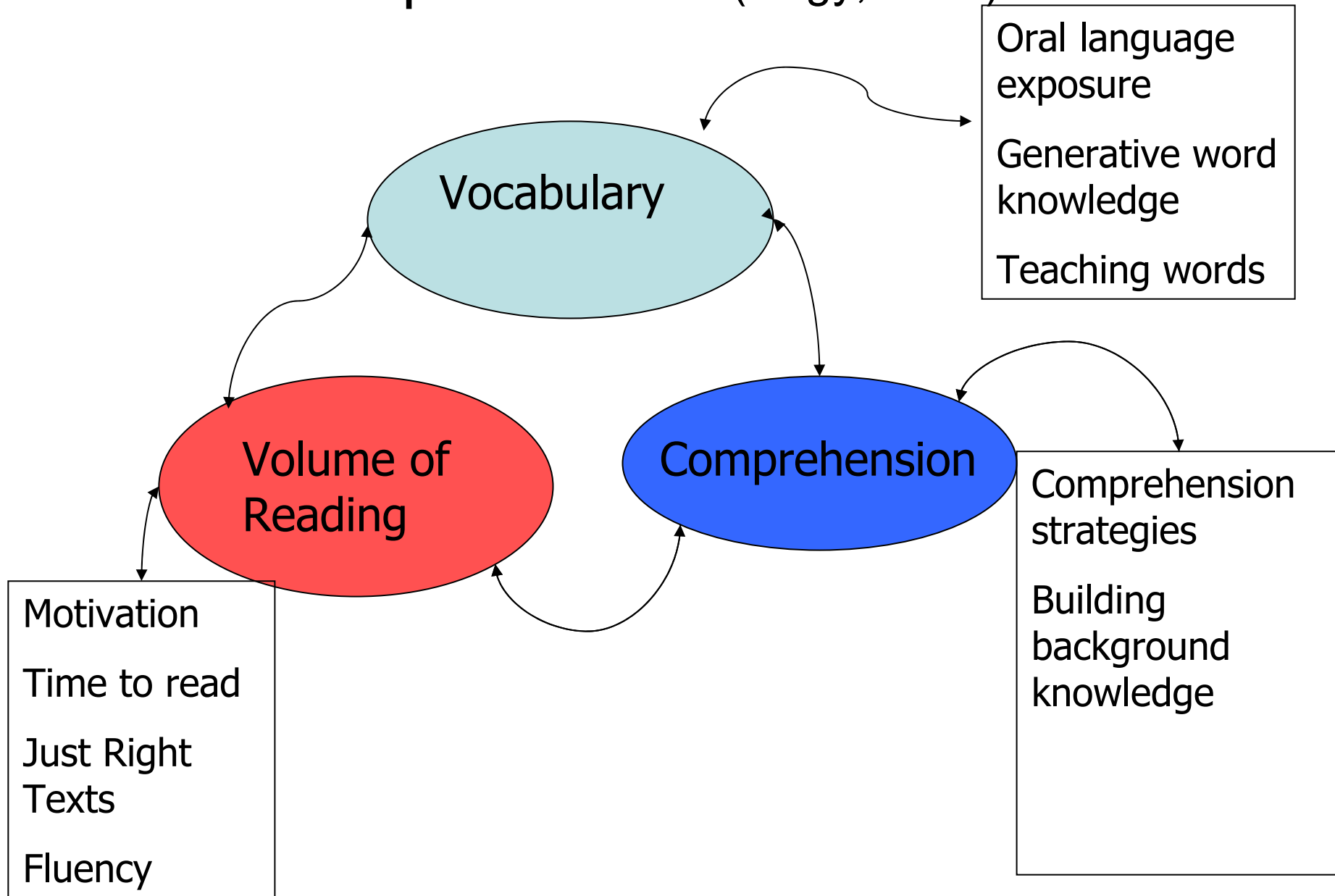
- With a partner, read a book at your table, look for words that would fit the Tier 2 category
  - narrow the choices down to 3 words
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# To teach the words

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- Contextualize the word in the story
  - Develop a student friendly definition for each word
  - Use the words beyond the story context
  - Encourage children to use the words
  - Put the words on a class “interesting word” chart
  - Make word relationships visible
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# Reciprocal Model of Vocabulary and Comprehension (Nagy, 2003)



# To increase comprehension through teaching vocabulary

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- ❑ Start early
- ❑ Be long term
- ❑ Increase generative vocabulary
- ❑ Include oral language and wide reading
- ❑ Integrate it into the curriculum

# Ways to make word learning fun

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- ❑ Keep a “wonderful word” chart, student journal, or word jar.
  - ❑ Ask students to share wonderful words they encountered during the day.
  - ❑ Encourage ESL students to share words in their language and compare to English.
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- Play with words through poems, riddles, jokes
  - Play word games.
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# Vocabulary Study

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What counts is that students find pleasure in words and in doing so gain independence in meaning making.

Ohanian, S. (2002). The great word catalogue.

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# Some fun word books

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- ❑ Cleary & Prosmitsky. *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What is an Adjective?* (and other titles)
  - ❑ Clements, A. *Double Trouble in Walla Walla*
  - ❑ Fraiser, D. *Miss Alaineus*
  - ❑ Gwynne, F. *The King Who Rained* (and others)
  - ❑ Heller, R. *Kites Sail High: A Book About Verbs*
  - ❑ Hopkins, L. *Wonderful Words: Poems About Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening*
  - ❑ Parrish, P. *Amelia Bedelia* (and others)
  - ❑ Pilkey, *Dog Breath*
  - ❑ Terban, M. *In a Pickle* (and others)
  - ❑ Ziefert, H. *Baby Buggy, Buggy Baby*
  - ❑ Alphabet books
  - ❑ Riddle books
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